



# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS<sup>®</sup> OF MARYLAND, INC.

## **Testimony to Maryland Climate Commission - Public Comment**

July 14, 2015, Baltimore, MD

Members of the League of Women Voters of Maryland and the national League have repeatedly expressed our concerns about global climate change and its impacts on our environment, our communities, our health, our economy and our very future.

We have reached a critical junction in Maryland. Our 3,000 miles of tidal shoreline make us one of the most vulnerable states in the nation when it comes to sea level rise. The Annapolis and Baltimore waterfronts and Ocean City face frequent flooding today. Baltimore set a record last month for the wettest June, with over 13 inches of rainfall. We recently organized an educational Forum at Chesapeake College on the Eastern shore. "The Future is Now: Dealing with Rising Seas on Maryland's Shores" was well-attended and highlighted action to protect the people in Eastern shore communities that face eroding coastlines and flooded farmland.

We support the work of the Maryland Climate Commission that identifies and seeks solutions for the potentially catastrophic problems we face from increasing fossil fuel emissions. The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act Plan has the potential to save lives and livelihoods, and to leave a livable Maryland for our children and grandchildren. While the GGRA has 150 programs and policies that will help get us to the clean energy goal, this important Act is due to expire in 2016. It must be renewed because its programs are key to making the carbon reductions that we desperately need.

The Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) for clean energy is an important feature of the GGRA. This framework for incentivizing clean, renewable sources, such as wind and solar, is essential if we are to cut Maryland carbon emissions 25 percent by 2020. However, with global warming accelerating faster than scientists predicted even five years ago, we can and should do more. We feel strongly that the RPS should be strengthened. In the future, we will need to increase the percentages of clean energy in the RPS and shorten the time frame for achieving these percentages, for example, realizing a 40 percent clean energy portfolio by 2025.

We are also facing the hard fact that the impacts of climate change fall relentlessly on our poorest communities. We should emphasize programs that permanently lower energy bills through conservation measures like certain home repairs, better insulation and energy efficient appliances. Less energy use means lower energy bills and lower carbon emissions.

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